

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL  
AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Grant Deuel School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2002-03**

**Team Members:** Michelle Powers, Office of Special Education, and Rita Pettigrew, Education Specialist

**Dates of On Site Visit:** September 23-24, 2002

**Date of Report:** September 25, 2002

---

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

<b>Promising Practice</b>	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
<b>Maintenance</b>	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
<b>Out of Compliance</b>	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
<b>Not applicable</b>	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

---

<b>Principle 1- General Supervision</b>
---

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

### **Data sources used:**

- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Personnel information
- Newspapers and Newsletters
- Child Find
- Budget Information
- Placement Data

### **Maintenance**

The district has sufficient child find practices in place. All staff are trained and certified to do screenings. Documentation of child find procedures are on file. Children are identified early.

The district follows necessary referral procedures. Staff is trained to identify and refer students. Documentation shows referrals procedures are being used and followed. Less than 5% of the students tested do not qualify.

The district has procedures in place for the parents who want to enroll their children in private schools. Staff is aware of procedures. No students from the district are in private schools. Procedures are stated in comprehensive plan.

The district maintains financial responsibility for out of district placements. The district is notified about meetings. Files show districts involvement. The district follows procedures for placements.

The district uses STARRS, state, and functional standards to determine progress. Students are assessed by qualified staff. Students participate with modifications if needed or take alternative tests.

The district follows guidelines for suspension/expulsion. Staff follow handbook and comprehension plan. No students on IEPs have been suspended or expelled.

The district hires qualified staff and follows necessary guidelines. Staff is trained to work with students with disabilities. The district provides opportunities for training and renewal credits.

## **Validation Results**

### **Maintenance**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of maintenance for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

### **Out of Compliance**

#### **Issues requiring immediate attention**

During a review of student files to verify the district's annual child count, the team identified a student who was dismissed from special education services in September, 2000. This student appears on the district's child count for 2001. The district will be required to return the funds for time periods during which they received funds in error.

## **Principle 2- Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

#### **Data sources used:**

- Surveys
- Preschool Screening
- Newspapers and Newsletters
- Child Find
- File Reviews
- Hearing/Vision Screening
- Northeast Education Cooperative (NESC) Inservice
- Parental Rights
- Comprehensive Plan

#### **Maintenance**

The district has policies in place for FAPE. The district utilizes NESC for training in this area. Parents and students feel they are provided a FAPE.

Regarding suspension/expulsion (FAPE) the district follows guidelines set forth in the comprehensive plan.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Maintenance**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of maintenance for FAPE as concluded by the steering committee.

## **Principle 3- Appropriate Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

### **Data sources used:**

- Surveys
- District Special Education Forms
- File Reviews
- Northeast Education Cooperative (NESC) Inservice
- Parental Rights
- Comprehensive Plan
- Excent Computer Program
- State Training

### **Maintenance**

File reviews show comprehensive evaluations are conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff and parent input is documented. Qualified staff administer evaluations. Guidelines are followed to meet criteria. Majority of parents felt evaluations helped in developing IEPs and were valid. Parents always receive copy of the evaluation results.

The district uses the Excent program, which has the required consent and written notice forms. Staff is certified and trained to use Excent program. File reviews and parent surveys indicate procedures are being followed.

The district follows guidelines in the comprehensive plan regarding evaluation procedures and instruments. Staff is sufficiently trained.

The district uses state guidelines to determine eligibility and category of disability. Staff is trained and qualified to determine eligibility. Files show team members agree with eligibility determination.

The district ensures reevaluation and continuing eligibility is determined within timelines. Staff is certified and trained. Files show timelines are followed for reevaluations.

### **Needs Improvement**

Functional assessments should be done in all areas of the disabilities. According to file reviews some reflected a lack of functional assessments in all areas of need

## **Validation Results**

### **Maintenance**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of maintenance for appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee.

### **Needs Improvement**

The review team was unable to verify that functional assessment was an area of needed improvement. The review team found in file reviews and interviews with staff that appropriate functional assessments were completed as part of comprehensive evaluations.

## **Out of Compliance**

### **ARSD 24:05:25:04:02. Determination of needed evaluation data**

#### Parental input into the evaluation process:

Districts are required to ensure that a variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional and development information about the child, including information provided by the parent. The review team found that the district has not ensured parental input into the evaluation process. The district does have a form for obtaining parental input, however the use of the form was not consistent. Interviews with staff indicate that the form is sent to parents but not always returned. Prior to the evaluation special education staff do make contact with families for input either by phone or in person, but these efforts are not documented. In interview with district staff, they indicated that they have begun to document contacts with parents by making notes on the prior notices for consent to evaluate. The review team did not see this consistently in the files reviewed.

## **Principle 4- Procedural Safeguards**

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

#### **Data sources used:**

- Surveys
- District Special Education Forms
- File Reviews
- NESC Inservice
- Parental Rights
- Comprehensive Plan
- Excent Computer Program
- State Training
- District Staff Development

#### **Maintenance**

The district follows guidelines set in Excent and the comprehensive plan for explaining transfer of rights. Staff is trained to address it one year prior to age of majority.

Policies and procedures are in place for written notice and consent prior to evaluating a student. Parental rights are given to parents. The district utilizes NESC for training. Consent is obtained prior to an evaluation.

The district follows guidelines for confidentiality. Staff is trained in this area and 100% of files have log in cumulative file.

The district follows guidelines in the comprehensive plan for independent educational evaluations (IEE). No requests for IEE reimbursements are on file.

The district outlines procedures for complaints in the comprehensive plan and in the parental rights brochure. No grievances have been filed with the district.

## **Validation Results**

### **Maintenance**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of maintenance for procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

### **Out of Compliance**

#### **FERPA Annual Notice of Rights**

A copy of the district's annual notice to parents regarding rights to inspect and review education records under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was found to be lacking in appropriate content. The notice, which appears in the "Back to School" packet, provides an abridged version of rights available to parents. The notice does not provide information to parents and students regarding the disclosure of directory information.

## **Principle 5- Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

### **Data sources used:**

- Surveys
- District Special Education Forms
- File Reviews
- NESC Inservice
- Parental Rights
- Comprehensive Plan
- Excent Computer Program
- State Training
- SD Technical Assistance Guide
- District Staff Development

### **Maintenance**

The district uses IEP teams according to guidelines in the Comprehensive Plan and SD Technical Assistance Guide. According to file reviews, appropriate team members were in attendance.

Staff is trained to include all requirements on each IEP. The district ensures policies and procedures are being followed by using the Excent Program and comprehensive plan.

## **Validation Results**

### **Maintenance**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of maintenance for IEP as concluded by the steering committee with the exception of transition services and transfer of student rights.

### **Areas Out of Compliance**

24:05:27:01:03 Content of individualized education program (IEP)

24:05:27:13 Modifications to regular vocational program

24:05:27:13.02 Transition services

24:05:30:16.01 Transfer of parental rights

Administrative rules state that transition planning must begin at age 14, with transition services beginning at age 16 or earlier if appropriate. Students need to be fully involved in the planning process, taking into account student preferences and interests. The review team completed a file review of seven students who are age fourteen and older. The transition portion of the IEP did not provide for an outcome orientated plan designed to assist students in moving out of school into appropriate post-secondary settings. The plans seen by the review team typically identified long-range employment and living outcomes, but the plans lacked appropriate linkages in goals and services to attempt to meet the stated outcomes. As an example, a student identified working on machines and fixing things as an employment outcome. His accompanying plan for transition had him working on English curriculum to address independent living and job skills. The student did have an assortment of job shadowing experiences, but these appear separate from any comprehensive plan. The student also had an independent living outcome that indicated the parent's desire to have the student live close to them, to ensure he would not be taken advantage of by peers, which would indicate the student would have skills to work on to prevent such situations from happening. However, the IEP stated in the independent living area "no services" and that the student "will be able to live on his own with some supervision by his family and help from VR".

The IEP team is required to address a course of study for students age fourteen and up. The course of study is designed as a planning device to help ensure students achieve their desired outcomes for employment and independent living. Student IEPs did not contain a course of study for students related to their outcomes, but instead references the courses being taken that year. Course of study must be addressed for each year of school through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade; this was not consistently found on transition student's IEPs.

The IEP team is required to address the transfer of rights to a student one year prior to turning eighteen. The review team noted students are informed of the transfer within a shorter timeframes. Example: providing notice to a student on 3/27/00 and the student turned eighteen on 6/2/00.

## **Principle 6- Least Restrictive Environment**

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

### **Promising practices**

The district has an integrated preschool program and an agreement with the local Headstart Program.

### **Maintenance**

The district has policies in place to support a continuum of LRE. The district ensures teachers have enough time to modify and consult about students with disabilities. Also students are placed with non-disabled peers as much as possible.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising practices**

Grant-Deuel Preschool Program

The district developed a collaborative preschool program for preschool-aged students throughout the district. It is open to any family residing in the district who has a child, ages 3-5. The program is a collaboration of Head Start, title program and special education service providers. Funding from the various sources, in combination with school district general funds supports the preschool program. The district reports the program to be an effective tool in providing appropriate developmental opportunities, as well as a tool for remediating potential areas of concern and early identification of students with special needs.

### **Maintenance**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of maintenance for LRE as concluded by the steering committee.